

# THE LITERARY FOCUS.

"Stilus optimus, et præstantissimus dicendi effector ac magister."

VOL. I.—MIAMI UNIVERSITY, OXFORD, O. FEBRUARY, 1828.—NO. 9.

EDITED BY THE ERODELPHIAN AND UNION LITERARY SOCIETIES.

## ORIGINAL ESSAYS.

[FOR THE FOCUS].

### THEORIES OF POLITICAL ECONOMY.

The American character is distinguished by enterprise; and never rests satisfied while any desirable object is in prospect and not possessed: and is very fertile in the imagination of things and events which are to exercise illimitable influence in the production of happiness, when none such are perceived to exist. This disposition to magnify the future in relation to the past, and to value the accomplishment of every step of our progress in life, but as it facilitates its successor, is certainly attended with many advantages; and particularly so in a new country, where the deductions of the experience of past ages are in a great measure inapplicable, and where original, inventive powers are requisite, which can meet successfully any emergency. The beneficial results therefore of the bold, experimenting spirit of our people, have hitherto been chiefly felt; and at the present period the danger of reverses is more imminent; because our prosperity is farther advanced. Every successive effort to hasten our progress in the accumulation of wealth and power, will be likely to yield a progressively diminishing return even when successful: and if unfortunate will expose us to more extensive losses. It is not prudent to hazard a certainty of vast moment, for the purpose of securing a supposed advantage of comparatively little worth; and the merchant, who in the commencement of his career, adventured his all in

desperate undertakings which allured by the promise of large profits, will be more cautious when settled down in the enjoyment of ease and independence.

Such thoughts, we think, may be useful at the present period. There is a spirit abroad of wild amendment in things that are well; and political theorists and pretended adepts are rising up in every part of the United States, and appear desirous of considering the whole nation as one vast subject of experiment. A statesman of this class, if informed by some of his more enlightened friends, that Reindeer are extremely useful in Lapland and constitute the chief part of the wealth of the inhabitants, would forthwith draft a bill or a petition to be presented to Congress, that a cargo of the animals might be imported, and then a prohibitory duty imposed on the article, to encourage the domestic manufacture. Another having discovered that Great Britain, one of the most populous countries of Europe, is also the wealthiest, immediately concludes with no common sagacity, that density of population is the cause of wealth: (less profound intellects would have thought this the consequence of wealth:) and reducing his theories to practice, complains loudly of the migratory habits of our people: and recommends to the wisdom of Congress the propriety of devising some means of checking their ambulatory propensities, and of confining them to narrower limits that their riches may increase more rapidly. We would suggest the appropriation of a few millions to the erection of State

Prisons on the model of those of Pennsylvania, which have the reputation of being remarkably productive of wealth: and as conveniences of this kind conduce in a high degree to the condensation of population. As respects this latter particular however, a more perfect model may be had in some of the other states. Doubtless the united wisdom of Congress will originate many estimable plans: but perhaps the success of the Penitentiary system will preclude the necessity of any farther research on this subject.

Are we then forever to be exposed to the nostrums of these inventors of "universal specifics?" The United States are now prosperous. Peace and plenty reign throughout our land. Wealth and population are increasing with more rapidity than has ever before been experienced; and in short, as a nation, our progress is unprecedented in history. Now what reason is there for believing that our advancement can be made still more extraordinary by the petty legislation of a few closet politicians? By performing his experiments on a body in sound health, the Quack may permanently injure the individual, but there is scarcely a possibility of his effecting any thing beneficial. Will we then, The People, suffer ourselves to be tampered with by those who would take the heart from the body that they might dissect it and examine its structure: and console the unfortunate subject with the promise that it shall be replaced when they are satisfied. Our trade and industry must be regulated by the rules which are supposed to have succeeded in other nations: but has their prosperity with these regulations, ever equalled ours without them? And since this is confessedly not the case, why must we be trammelled by laws which if they accomplish any thing, can only tend to reduce our unrivalled progression to an equality with that of the other na-

tions of the world? No people has ever advanced so steadily and so rapidly in prosperity as the American: and History gives us no encouragement to hope for greater progress than what exists: and though we would be sorry to say that there is no possibility of quickening our pace in the march of improvement, it is certainly much more probable that every attempt made with this design should prove detrimental than otherwise. In the natural course of things we must at a period not far distant, be a great nation, producing almost every necessary and luxury of life within ourselves: since our territory extends from the 25th to the 49th parallel of latitude. But to reach this state, some time is necessary, just as time would be required to accomplish a journey though you were travelling 24 miles an hour on a rail road: and while Providence is thus carrying us on with a velocity before unknown, it becomes us to rejoice in what is pleasant of our condition; and not to murmur because we cannot fly through the air: and to conceive it possible to increase the motion of 12, or 14 millions of human beings, stimulated by self interest, by the magic influence of a few paltry paragraphs, prepared by persons who have the presumption to think themselves qualified to direct the industry of individuals in their several occupations, is the merest trifling that ever possessed the minds of rational men.

Reasoning from facts is invaluable when conducted by caution and intelligence: but although most useful when properly applied, it is most hurtful when abused. The aberrations of the Theorist may expose him to the laughter of those who are willing to be amused by the weak points of other men's characters; and possibly may lead himself or his neighbors into speculations destructive of their property; but such influence will never extend very far,

and even the errors of an ingenious mind may show to others the way to important discoveries: since it is only by successive trials and failures that the most momentous truths have been gradually approached. Those however who reason incorrectly from facts cannot fail to involve themselves in the most serious difficulties, nor escape the lamentable consequences of their conduct; while the only advantage which they reap from their misfortunes, is to purchase at a very dear rate the experience which should have been taught by the facts from which they set out. In truth there is no kind of argumentation so difficult, if we wish to proceed with precision and accuracy, as that which in the common affairs of life is designed to influence conduct; and which to accomplish this purpose appeals to facts. It is obvious that to know whether any example, to which reference may have been made, is applicable or not in the case under consideration, we must be informed of all the important circumstances connected with each, and must also have ascertained whether some adventitious circumstance in the fact adduced, may not have given a different turn to the natural course of things. Those therefore who possess the most extensive knowledge must frequently find all their information inadequate, and be compelled to decide from probability rather than from certainty, in the great questions of Political Economy. If this be so, how contemptible must it appear to every well informed person, that individuals without having studied the Science and often without the capacity to understand it;—without any but the most superficial acquaintance with foreign countries and their relations, which are brought forward in support of positions which are defended without argument as they were adopted without reflection;—without any other knowledge of the

interests and affairs of our own country, to influence which the example of other nations is introduced, than such as is founded on the oracular decisions of the small fry of newspaper Editors, as well and as ill informed as themselves;—that such men should assume the province of determining whether any particular policy will be profitable, and if so, to what extent, in relation to these United States, of the geographical limits of which, and the staple productions of the several departments, in all probability they are totally ignorant.

There is another peculiarity which renders ratiocination from facts more embarrassing and uncertain in the attainment of accuracy than any other kind of reasoning. Many unconnected facts coexist, and it is oftentimes extremely troublesome, and requires the most unwearied patience and perseverance, to ascertain which relate to the event which engages our attention; and of those which are relative, to distinguish the constant and modifying circumstances from those which are accidental. Many circumstances are united with a certain event, and perhaps have all operated in its production, some with more efficiency, others with less. But to determine the precise agency of each particular, is frequently beyond our power; and thus a wide field lies open for the exertion of prejudice, which may cause us to disregard every circumstance but that which harmonizes with our preconceived notions. Hence we are not taught by experience, and indeed cannot be said even to have enjoyed the converse of experience; since she has never shared our counsels, and has been admitted after judgment only to be tortured that a confession may be wrung from her in its support.

There is a very glaring instance of the procedure just noted, in the use which is made of the example of Great Britain by the advocates of

the restrictive system. Britain has certainly arrived at very considerable elevation as regards wealth and power; and it is true that she has with great uniformity pursued the exclusive policy, in her relations with other nations of the civilized world: and hence it is concluded with the most unhesitating confidence by those who favor this policy, that Britain has owed to it all the wealth and prosperity which she now enjoys. It will be proscribed as visionary, and draw forth the dooming phrase "metaphysical speculation" from some who are accustomed to despise whatever they do not comprehend, to suggest the inquiry whether there may not possibly have been more efficient causes of Britain's prosperity than the restrictions she imposed on her trade. That there were co-existent causes, none surely will go so far as to deny; and therefore the only question which needs examination is whether or not their operation was beneficial; and if not, whether it was absolutely prejudicial, though the effect was more than counterbalanced by the salutary action of the restrictive code.

We are persuaded that separate from a subject in which feelings and prejudices govern more absolutely than reason, most men must perceive how preposterous it is to ascribe to a few enactments of Parliament the present power and wealth of the British nation. The central position of the British Islands in regard to the length of Europe, presents great facilities for commerce: and naturally has made them the market both of the North and South. Hence it was almost inevitable that Britain should be a commercial nation; and consequently that she should advance in opulence, as has always been the case with those who have received the riches of Trade. Their intercourse with foreigners cultivated in the English habits of industry,

since they were assured of a large return for all the products of their labor; and the comparative power of the people, and especially the security of private property, fostered a spirit of enterprize, and hence they were enabled to take the start of the other nations of Europe; and the preeminent natural advantages of their situation have given permanence to their superiority. We may add that the inhabitants of islands have usually been found to be more hardy and adventurous than those of continents; and even Asiatic indolence and effeminacy disappear in a great measure amongst the nations of the Asiatic Archipelago. Their boldness and spirit of enterprize carried the English over the whole earth, and planted colonies in every quarter; and however true it may be that these possessions have been a source of expense to the mother country, the gains of individuals far exceeded what was lost by the nation collectively.

We should take notice also that liberty of person and thought in Great Britain, carried forward with vigor, knowledge and science; and education was more common throughout the kingdom than among the neighboring nations of the continent: to this moral influence much is to be attributed, not only because that in this way the skill of British artists was made to surpass that of all others, but inasmuch as habits of sobriety and industry were cherished amongst all classes by the diffusion of intelligence. Now we have enumerated a few of the circumstances, which must occur to every mind instantaneously without any search after them, as powerful agents in the progress which Britain has made to her present wealth and authority; and a closer inquiry would show that we have but glanced at the subject: but without pretending to have made more than a partial examination, will any one say that the

British power has been raised wholly upon the restrictive system? Or will not some suspect that adequate causes have been assigned for the growth and present grandeur of Britain, even on the supposition that her exclusive policy has always been hanging upon her as a dead weight and to some extent repressing the energies of her people? When we view the capabilities of the kingdom of Great Britain, does its condition in our own day, appear so extraordinary that it cannot be imagined to have arisen in the usual course of things? Or is it necessary to have recourse to the restrictions on Trade to account for the enormous extent of British commerce, and not rather to explain why it is not still more extensive? When we would draw comparisons with the rapid progress of the commerce of our own country, the difficulty is to give a reason why that of Britain has advanced so slowly; and none more satisfactory can be offered than the vexatious restrictions under which it labored, from which we have been hitherto pretty free.

The charge of metaphysical darkness which has been laid by some against the most correct writers on Political Economy, perhaps for the same reason that an exceedingly reverend animal with erect ears and a grave face complains of the brightness of sunshine, has never been shown to have the least foundation: and those who have ventured to give examples of the justice of the assertion, very soon convinced the charitable individuals whose sympathies had been engaged in their behalf, that the source of the evil was more radical. To brand the reasoning of your opponents with an opprobrious name, is a method of escaping fair and open discussion, more easy than honorable; and should excite the indignation of every candid mind. It is not true that the strength of the liberal system consists in impalpable

distinctions and abstract reasonings which have no applicability to real life. The great difference between the opposite systems, is that the restrictive seizes upon a few isolated facts; and without much scrutiny builds upon them a broad structure, to which every thing must be made subservient, without regard to time, or place, or any other difference whatever: a universal rule is formed on a very partial induction of facts, and to this all things must bend. The liberal system reasons upon the broad principles of human nature; and acknowledging that to infer what an individual will do in certain circumstances from what an individual has done in similar circumstances, is very fallacious, still rests on the fact that in proportion as we extend our survey so as to include a large number of individuals, the probability of error in our estimation of what will be their conduct in certain circumstances, from what has been the conduct of a similar body in similar circumstances, is diminished; and that mankind will do as mankind have done.

It is possible to prove any thing to be the cause of any thing, if coexistence in time be deemed adequate evidence; and in this manner the rude and unlettered people are fixed in the belief of the direful influence of comets, which "shake pestilence and war amongst the nations:" since owing to the brotherly dispositions which obtain among men, it is scarcely possible that a comet should appear, and that there should not happen wars during the time of its remaining visible, short as this period always is. It can be shown equally beyond cavil, by the same process of reasoning, that wars have been suffering under a bad name, and that instead of sapping the foundation of national strength, they are sources of prosperity: and thus the greatest conqueror should be esteemed most highly as a national benefac-

tor. No nation of the civilized world has been engaged in such destructive and expensive wars as Great Britain; and yet none of the nations of Europe have advanced so rapidly in opulence, and the general well being of the people; therefore it follows that war has a beneficial influence, and its salutary effects are most visible with those who have been least frequently visited by the more smiling countenance of peace.

But there is a doctrine still more closely connected with the subject of our present remarks, that has had the support of some; and which, if we reason as those who favor a high tariff and prohibitory duties on foreign products, from isolated facts, is impregnable to argument: we allude to the opinion that a national debt is a national blessing. If we cast our eye over the different quarters of the world, we may discover that the wealthiest and most prosperous nations are most deeply involved in debt; and that such has been the case heretofore. Great Britain will again do us good service as an extreme case of the striking accuracy of the opinion: with a debt of about 4,000,000,000 of dollars she enjoys all the comforts and blessings of civilized life, far above most of the continental nations; and the occasional sufferings of a part of her population flow rather from this, that the art of manufacturing has reached a certain stage amongst them, than from the pressure of the public debt: and we have no reason to think that the miseries which the lower classes have endured for short periods would have been alleviated, had the nation been perfectly free from debt. The national debt then should be allowed to participate with the restrictive policy in the honors of raising Britain to her present state, and we think that their claims are very nearly equal.

It is really time that we should pause and reflect: some of our poli-

ticians have assumed the theory that manufactures are necessary to the happiness of a state; and having by one or two facts, dis severed from their connection, and aided by the fertility of their imaginations, given some plausibility to the hypothesis, they seem determined to hazard all and make all sacrifices rather than yield to the plain dictates of common sense, and permit individuals to get riches as fast as they can and in their own way. The industrious man needs no encouragement to provide for his family; and for spending an easy and comfortable old age; the indolent deserves none. We have not the slightest inclination to exaggerate the evils which have already resulted from the forcible interference of the laws in the concerns of private industry, by bounties and prohibitory duties, by this means violently diverting the productive efforts of the nation from their natural channel: if the system is carried out, it is not easy to say how far its destructive effects may extend; but if we form an opinion from what it has already accomplished, we have much to fear. From the official reports we are informed that the imports in 1825, were more than 96,000,000 of dollars; those in 1826, were 85,000,000; the imports in 1827, were only 81,000,000 of dollars. There is then a deficiency in comparison with the preceding year, of four millions of dollars; in comparison with 1825, of fifteen millions. The imports in 1827, were about equal to the average annual imports, in the years 1822, 1823, 1824: that is in three years, during which period our population must have increased more than a million; our commerce has been stationary. Is this one of the *beneficial* effects of the tariff of 1824? That it is one of its effects is pretty certain; and if the nation will suffer itself to be gulled by a few interested manufacturers, and led by wild theorising poli-

ticians, in a very short time, other beneficial effects of the same kind will be both seen and felt. R.

[FOR THE FOCUS.]

### SHADES OF CHARACTER.

Every person who has taken the least observation of the beauties of nature, must have remarked the striking difference produced on the same objects by alternations of light and shade. That landscape which presents to view a thousand beauties when lighted by the tender beams of a morning sun, may be gloomy and monotonous when the shadows of evening descend; while many a prospect may lie in dull obscurity till the western sun irradiates its individual features, and by a mellow influence develops its peculiar beauties. It is vain to say the objects are the same. They receive adventitious charms from the difference of perspective; as the beauty of a woman is heightened by a particular style of dress; and the same features are lovely or uninteresting, as they are adorned or disfigured by beautiful or ill selected colors and drapery. The same remark holds true with regard to character. No two individuals differ more from one another, than the same one in different societies. You may see the same person in one company for a number of years together, without being acquainted with all the minutiae of his character; while if you but meet him by accident with another party, you may perceive at a glance all the varieties of his mind, all the shades of his intellect.

I had long been acquainted with Josephus, as we are acquainted with many people. I had seen him in the family where he resides, and thinking him a very uninteresting person, had never paid him any particular attention. It happened one evening, that Josephus was at a party where I should never have expected to see him—where wit, sentiment and viva-

city gave a zest to conversation; and I was surprised to see features, which appeared to me incapable of animation, brighten with intelligence and sparkle with gaiety. I paid attention to his conversation and found it replete with delicacy, spirit and taste, and have ever since cultivated him as a valuable friend and a man of superior intellect.

A similar circumstance happened to me once in a mixed company, where some topics of taste were started. A man for whose judgment I had a profound regard, addressed some remarks to a person whose very plain appearance and common physiognomy promised no advantages; nor could my esteem for the first speaker chain my attention to the person addressed, till a sentence in a very superior style of language caught my ear, and then looking round, I found my utmost attention fully repaid by very sound judgment, very accurate information and very elegant expression. I was mentioning this incident one day to a young friend of mine who has spirit, sense, and emulation—"Ah!" said he, "that would please me. I should like to remain in company unnoticed till some subject called me forth, and then to astonish every body by unexpected talents."

It must be confessed that there is something very gratifying in thus starting forth when the proper string is touched, as Satan started up in his own form at the touch of Ithuriel's spear; but it is not in the power of every one thus to surprise a circle with a display of unsuspected powers, nor does the common ambition to please always leave the judgment at liberty to select the best occasions for shining. Wit and talent, like every other trait of the human character, depend greatly on secondary causes. The prejudices of education, the peculiar habits of life, the unaccordant manners of the society in which we are placed, may, for a

while, almost obscure them, or even render the possessor himself unconscious of his real powers. Even genius, that superiority of mind by which it seizes in an instant, creates, combines and carries into execution by its sole energy, a high and forcible idea—even genius, may lie, for a while, dormant in the soul, till some unthought of occasion calls it forth, when the force, the energy of a moment, may outweigh the whole of a common life. But where there are powers, though not sufficiently great to merit the name of genius, they are attended with too much latent consciousness, to be repressed even by prejudice, habit or uncongenial society, as in the case of Josephus; and the possessor of talent is too fearful of overlooking the proper moment for displaying it, to wait till he can fill the measure of astonishment.

Perhaps it is better for the world that it should be so. Were every man to wrap himself up in reserve, till some moment worthy of his powers presented itself, how much gay and spirited conversation should we lose, how many charming hours would roll on in unbroken stupidity. But we need not fear this alarming consequence. That restless and universal principle, vanity, is successful enough in undermining the pride that would prompt such a reserve; and vanity, absurd as it is, is a very accommodating stimulus, and acts very well on the every day occasions of life. Nor is my friend Josephus wholly free from its influence: in fact I am not sure that vanity might not be at the bottom of that gloomy, misanthropic reserve in which he wrapped up his talents. Piqued that he was not more courted and encouraged, he might believe himself justified in concealing from minds so dissimilar, talents of which he might think them unworthy.

Sometimes, indeed, circumstances may effectually repress the dawns

of genius; and even minds capable of the most exalted exertions may be wholly unconscious of the ethereal fire that is slumbering within them: then if any accident kindle the flame it bursts out at once unsuspected and invincible, and pursues its career in despite of all outward obstacles. K.

[FOR THE FOCUS]

### A FRAGMENT.

It was on a November evening that I wanderd, scarcely conscious whether I went, into the dark and gloomy shade of an almost impenetrable forest; heavy clouds were rolling with rapidity through Heaven's vast expanse, and mournfully did the hollow winds murmur through the forest. The gay flowers, that had once adorned the pleasant banks of a small brook, had long since faded; not an object was visible that could charm the eye, or please the fancy of man: the whole scene presented nought but dreariness. The wild birds that had once so sweetly warbled in the grove, were now silent, and "not a sound nor a note was heard," save the screechings of nocturnal owls, and the howlings of rapacious wolves.

In such a situation, so well calculated to excite the imagination of a romantic youth, I stood wrapped in the mantle of enthusiasm. The natural bent of my disposition was military, and fame I considered as the only thing in life desirable,—as that to which all other things were to be referred. With fond credulity have I looked forward to that period when I should arrive at the highest pinnacle of fame and glory; when by my exertions, I should be entitled to have my name handed down to posterity as worthy their admiration. Such were the sentiments and hopes that I had entertained from my childhood: the cold, calculating moralist may, if he chooses, deride their vanity and folly; but certain it is that

such anticipations as these, if not indulged in to too great excess, constitute the happiest part of man's life. For in youth there is an elasticity of spirit, which surmounts every difficulty, and removes every barrier; and though disappointed in every expectation the warm heart is not chilled; the active mind hurries on to something equally romantic, hoping to find happiness.—I fancied that I had already left my home, that the fond maternal kiss had been impressed upon my cheek, and that far, far away I sought for glory and renown in the tented field. There were beings in the world whom I held dear to me as my hearts blood; the love and affection of those, I thought, would have nerved my every power; would have endued me with a strength almost supernatural, and enabled me amid the cannon's roar and clashing swords to act as became a man. The memory of that parent who watched over my tenderest infancy; the recollection of that angelic being, to whom, as I folded her to my heart, I vowed eternal love and constancy; and the remembrance of the companions of my youth, to whom my soul was united by the tenderest bonds of friendship and affection—whose memory was engraven on my heart, too deeply ever to be erased, and too closely connected with the dearest recollections of happy days ever to be forgotten, would have rushed upon my mind, and animated me to have sacrificed life, rather than disgrace those whom I so ardently loved.

It may have been, that when far removed from those dangers, I could despise and condemn them, but had they been actually present, my resolution would have been shaken and my strength failed. But, like one determined to avoid all disagreeable reflections, I suffered not this thought to enter my mind: I looked only for fame, and vainly supposed the attainment of this within my power.

Suddenly my attention was arrested. The clouds had gathered into one solid mass, and threw the darkness of midnight over the forest; the reverberation of "Heaven's loud artillery" was continual, and the flashing of the forked lightning often illuminated the scene, serving however, only to render the succeeding gloom more horrible. Anxious to escape the coming storm, I hurried forward; but owing to the darkness of the night, only became more deeply involved in the mazy windings of the wild.

At length exhausted with fatigue, I reclined upon the trunk of an aged beech. At but a little distance before me I perceived the figure of a man. He stood, as if the genius of the storm, regardless of the elements warring above and around him; he felt them not, nor did he hear them; wrapped in his thoughts he stood erect with his arms folded on his breast; his eyes intently fixed on vacancy, and though not a word escaped his lips, yet, the agitation of his countenance showed but too plainly the disordered mind. He appeared to be employed in the meditation of some dark, some deep design, to the exclusion of every other object. I ventured a nearer approach to the stranger; at this moment the forest was again illuminated by the vivid lightning's glare, and I was struck with horror and surprise mingled with pleasure, at beholding in him my first, my dearest friend.

Some years had rolled by since the pursuits of life had separated us. At that time he was the gayest of the gay; his life had been crossed by no misfortunes; and he looked forward to the future with a heart full of hope, perceiving nought in life but that which was desirable. But now how changed! his eye was sunk deep in his head, his features were marked with care, and every thing about his person bore witness that he was a child of sorrow. I ac-

costed him—he awoke from his reverie, as from a deep sleep; and as he recognised me, a transient smile glanced across his way-worn features, which plainly said “I am not what I once was.”

After that conversation had passed, which is usual to those who have been long separated, I enquired, why his brow was darkened, and what circumstances had occurred, thus to render him who was once so gay, now so sad and melancholy. I had touched upon a tender chord: his frame became agitated, and a deep sigh burst from his burning heart.

“So sad and melancholy?” said he, Yes: I am wretched; I am miserable. Never for a single moment is my heart at rest; but the remembrance of scenes that have occurred in days that are past and gone is ever present to my mind, harrowing up the very depths of my soul. You well recollect that at the time we parted I was flushed with the ardent spirit of youth: then my hopes were the most sanguine, my prospects the most flattering: my mind had dreams too romantic and too fanciful. I pictured out life in high colors, such as are never to be realised. In my cooler moments, I was sensible that these thoughts and schemes of after life were too vain and frivolous for a reasonable mind to indulge in; yet I found something bordering on pleasure, in such reflections, and I still persisted in them, contrary to my better judgment. I was susceptible of admiration for female charms, perhaps to a fault. Many a weary dance has my mind been led, by a single glance from a pretty black eye half hid under the neat straw hat. Each, for the time being, was sole mistress of my heart, and her I fancied a perfect angel: but none of those attachments being founded on a solid basis, they proved as evanescent as the morning dew. With such feelings, so easily excited by female beauty, you need not wonder

that I loved and adored Clara Henderson, a being whom but to know was to admire. Describe her I cannot. In order to form any just conception of her loveliness, you should have seen her. Her person was tall and commanding; her countenance beamed with heavenly simplicity, so that while the beholder was struck with awe he felt himself attracted to her by the irresistible force of her charms. I had before loved: but all the females of my acquaintance were but as dust in the balance, when compared with my divine, my inestimable Clara. Her person was lovely, even beyond the loveliness of her sex. But it was not the deep blue azure of that beaming eye, nor that eloquent glance which needed not the aid of speech, nor that arch and tender smile which spoke of love and truth, that I most admired: I adored her for her noble, lofty soul, her warm and generous heart, alive to every sentiment of tenderness and affection. She had not that coldness and apathy, common to those who have employed their youth in difficult and laborious researches; but her breast glowed with all the warmth, tenderness, and sensibility of soul, that woman can feel.

I loved her to madness; and for her would I have undergone any privation, however severe: I would have taken her to my heart, and there protected and nourished her while a drop of blood animated my body. With her I would have known no sorrow nor affliction: but this world we would have made a paradise, passing our days in comfort and happiness, unmoved and unruffled by the storms of life. But ah! She knew me not. She was ignorant of the warm, the violent love which this heart felt for her. I was rejected. A villain had been before me, who had slandered my character: he had represented me as a person the most vile, the most odious; and he a villain of the blackest die, dead to

every sentiment of honor and humanity, insensible to the charms either of her mind or person, and desirous only of possessing her wealth—sought and obtained her hand. Would that death had lain me in the cold and silent grave, ere I had seen her whom I held dearer to me than all the world beside, united to him who had blasted my character forever.

O God! what torments did I endure! What agony of mind did I suffer! I wished, I longed for death, to relieve me from the load of misery with which I was overwhelmed. Reason had well nigh forsaken her seat; but through the exertions of a dear, and kind hearted friend, I became in some degree settled; but my feelings still overpowered me, and a desire for revenge succeeded the heart rending sorrow that I had before felt.

Vain was the thought that the blood of my enemy would wash away my misery and restore me to happiness! But the prospect of revenge was sweet to me, and I brooded over it with the spirit of the damned: and long ere the rising sun had thrown the least glimmerings of light on the eastern horizon, my poniard had penetrated his heart, and he lay beside his bride a lifeless corse, weltering in his blood.

I flew from the spot with the celerity of lightning, and dashed into the depths of the forest: though pursued, I escaped detection and arrived at New Orleans. I there tried to forget my grief and sorrow; but the effort was vain. The recollection of Clara, of the happiness I might have enjoyed with her, of my wounded reputation now also stained with the guilt of an ignominious crime, and of the peace of mind that I had once enjoyed, would arise in my soul and overwhelm me with anguish. I engaged in business, mingled with company, and partook of the inebriating bowl: but all to no

effect. I have since found that happiness is not for me to enjoy: and you now behold him, who was once happy, once respectable, a guilty wanderer, and an outcast from mankind: an example to warn all from indulging in anticipations too high, and hopes too romantic.

ALCANDER.

[FOR THE FOCUS.]

**LES AMOURETTES, NO. 2.**

'She vow'd, she swore she wad be mine,  
She said she lo'ed me best of ony;  
But oh the fickle, faithless quean,  
She's ta'en the carl and left her Johnny.'

MRS. GRANT.

Anatomists tell us, that there is an intimate connexion between the nose and the eyes; and had I ever felt disposed to doubt the truth of the assertion, the incident which terminated my 'first love' would have made me a proselyte to the belief. The shock upon my olfactories, restored to their proper tone, my organs of vision, and I was now enabled to view things in their true colors. What had before appeared to me an object of the most exquisite loveliness, now put on the form of a rude and slatternly girl. Golden tresses were turned to carrot locks; rosy cheeks took the hue of an over burnt brick-bat; a clear lilly complexion resembled a weather-beaten pine board; and that voice, once thought so melodious, rivalled in discordancy the screeching of a night-owl. Oh ladies beware of onions!\*\*\*\*\*

Yes, it must indeed be 'an ill wind that blows *nobody* good', and I never found reason to regret the blast, that in extinguishing the first flashes of my folly, blew me into the good graces of Ellen R.

Years have since rolled by, and various are the vicissitudes which I have witnessed and experienced; and yet the form of *that* girl is now before me, as when I used to gaze upon it with all the rapturous fervency of youthful admiration. Her stature was below the ordinary size

of one just ripening into womanhood; but the airy elegance of her well-proportioned figure, would be ample compensation, even in the eye of a connoisseur, for this blemish in her beauty. Her features of the finest mould, had in them that which imparted an additional power of charming:—a certain *je ne sais quoi* of expression—a *something* which denotes virtue and intelligence in the possessor—a soul beaming of countenance, which can never be mistaken. A face may have all the other requisites for rendering it what the world calls handsome, but without this heavenly irradiation of the mind—this reflection of intellectual light, it can never be really beautiful. Away with your looks that express nothing; I would almost prefer a malignant leer to the gaping stare of fatuity.

But Ellen's personal beauty was nothing when compared to the supremacy of her noble mind. The first was but the mirror of the latter—the type by which it was represented. But enough of description; this is not my *forte*: and to describe a beautiful female is a task particularly difficult. It is like trying to tell the hue of changeable silk:—a difference of position or in the intensity of the light by which you view it, will effect an alteration while you are yet speaking.

Ellen's first appearance at our school, was on the very day upon which occurred the affray of which I have spoken: and as her parents had lately arrived in that part of the country, this was the first time that I had seen her. Whether it was that she discovered something prepossessing in my person, or whether she was more pleased with the gallant manner in which I vindicated the honor of my fair one, is a question which I have never, even to this day, been able to determine. Vanity would teach me to think that both these causes had some influence: but

then that officious monitor, Common Sense insists upon it that my beauty is a quality which he has never yet discovered; and he believes it quite improbable that one should be admired for his valorous spirit, when the only proof of it is that he has received a drubbing. However be the reason what it may, the fact was clear. She conceived, or at least appeared to conceive, a violent passion for my sweet self; and I, who have never been accused of ingratitude in this respect, was, to be sure, not backward in reciprocating her affection, in short I was taken by a *coup d'oeil*; and was forced to surrender the garrison of my heart, without even being granted terms of capitulation. In plain English, a glance from her bright twinklers set my heart a dancing to the sweet music of her voice, and I was in love.

We soon came to a perfect understanding, and were 'every thing to each other.' We played, we sung, we rambled the fields together. Our tastes were similar;—we read the same novels, admired the same poetry. By the by, speaking of poetry, I once even attempted myself to address a sonnet "To Ellen's eyes". Thus it was:

I had just returned from a long moon-light walk with my charmer, more than ever convinced of the many perfections centered in the angelic creature, when the poetic *furor* seized me. I snatched up a pen, and hastily seating myself at my desk, prepared to pour forth the 'virgin lay.' A fine and unsullied sheet of imperial gilt edged paper was spread in tempting whiteness before me, kindly offering its assistance for unburthening my soul surcharged with harmony, and inviting me to make its pure bosom the confidant of my passion and the repository of my glowing thoughts. I began—

The sun may shrink behind a cloud,  
The moon with envy veil her face,  
For nature's voice proclaims aloud  
That Ellen's eyes are—

Are what? Here I came to a 'dead halt.' For the life of me, I could find nothing that would rhyme with *face*, and yet preserve some shadow of sense.\* *Place, pace, race, mace*—none of them would answer my purpose. I turned and twisted the verse into all manner of shapes, but could make nothing better of it; I knocked at the front of my pericranium, a hollow sound was the only response; I sipped at the Castalian fount, in the shape of a rhyming dictionary, but the draught was not inspiring; I severally invoked each muse, but the coy Pierian maids heeded not my call. I burnt the paper, threw away my pen, spilt the ink, and abjured poetry *forever*; convinced that as my ideas refused to glide in metre, I must be content to limp in prose.

But, as old Parson ——— used to say, 'I hasten to the conclusion.' I saw Ellen, for the last time, on the evening of the day on which she completed her fifteenth year. On the next day her father had resolved to put in execution his contemplated removal to the distant town of D——; and with many protestations of eternal constancy, an interchange of vows, and an agreement to maintain a regular correspondene, we separated.

True to her word, for some time each mail brought me at least one letter, filled with the warmest language of love and endearment. But afterwards they came less frequently, their contents appeared couched in a colder and more reserved style, and at last they ceased altogether. Unable to divine the cause, I was on the rack of anxiety; fearing the ali-

\*I have since learned that this circumstance need not have troubled me. It is the general opinion of the present day that *SENSE* is by no means an indispensable requisite in the manufacture of 'love verses'; the preference is at all times to be given to *SOUND*. The last line might then have been,

Those eyes will sure supply their place.

enation of her affections, but yet unwilling to persuade myself that there was truth in the conjecture. After several weeks of disappointment, I called one day at the Post-office, more in despair than in hope, and again received the cheerless answer, 'No letters for you, sir.' With a heavy heart I was turning away, when my eye fell upon a packet of newspapers from D——, which had just arrived. With a listless curiosity I glanced over the pages of one of them, and in a corner, surmounted by two impaled hearts, like gizzards on a skewer, was this brief notice:

'*Hymeneal*:—Married on Thursday last, by the Rev. A. C. D——, Mr. J—— M——, of this place, to Miss ELLEN R——, late of ——.'

HARRY.

[FOR THE FOCUS.]

### THE STUDY OF ANTIQUITY.

We cling with fond tenacity to the recollection of joys that have departed, and the happiness of days that have passed away. It would appear that this extends further than ourselves and from a sympathy of feeling, we take a deep interest in enquiring what may have been the happiness or misery of our fellow beings, and dwell with anxious solicitude on the tale of their joy or wo. So far does this feeling pervade us, that when we hear of some ancient state, whose name is perhaps almost all that has escaped the desolation of years, our fancy is warmed and our imagination begins to people the vast regions of an empire and to weave the varied incidents that fill out the life of man. We make a fiery creation of our own, glowing with all the colors of romance and embellished with all we have conceived of elegance and grace. Should the person be of a romantic cast, he transforms this, to him newly discovered land into

one abounding in all that is novel, magnificent or strange. Or is he a book-worm, who wears out his life poring over musty quartos and decyphering half obliterated manuscripts? wrapt in thought, he is borne away to Herculaneum, Pompeii or some other grave of ancient literature; and there, intent on his purpose, exerts every nerve, to rescue from tombs of impenetrable lava some precious relic of science. Or perhaps he fancies himself groping through the crumbling vault of some dilapidated tower: in imagination he sees a vase engraven with mystic symbols, and in rapture he raises his "eureka," as if the knowledge of some secret of the greatest import, or the discovery of some momentous truth, had suddenly flashed upon his mind. We free ourselves from the shackles which bind us to the present, and cast ourselves afloat on the stream of time; and as we are wafted back towards its source, we feel like some adventurer navigating unknown seas: the very weeds that float upon the ocean yield joy to our hearts, as some indications that we are again approaching land, and may once more be gladdened by the presence of man, even though savage and rude.

Whether philanthropy and a laudable zeal to rescue from oblivion the scanty remains of antiquity that have reached us, are the motives which influence many of the literati in their laborious researches in antiquities, I am not at present able to determine; or whether it is some apprehension for their own fate, some "secret dread—some inward horror at falling into nought" that induces them to cling to every straw that may keep them afloat: or rather whether it is not "some longing after immortality," that prompts them to fasten themselves, as an appendage to a great name, I am equally at a loss to conclude. Or perhaps they think it more advisable that these masters of the waves, of indestructible forma-

tion should stem the tide; and that their own fragile barks should securely follow in their wake and win the immortality of a name, merely from being some way connected with works that must last while literature holds a place in the estimation of men. Thus future generations, doing as they would wish to be done by, may award their measure of glory to these humble collectors of manuscripts and the very erudite expositor of "different readings."

But the more plausible hypothesis is that these antiquarians have availed themselves of all the improvements and learning of their own times, and yet their insatiable minds, unsatisfied with the repast, seek to rifle the grave of its treasures and riot in the sweets, chastened, and mellowed by age. Else why should they pay so much attention to a kind of learning that can yield them no actual benefit, if there remained much to be acquired that every day would need? Whether they are thus learned in things that are beneficial to themselves and their country, let their own lives and writings answer. And why is it that men of this kind of learning are so anxious to publish their labours to the world? It is probable that in their ardent desire to be useful it may have occurred to them that they would be robbing mankind of their share of action should they fail to blazon every manuscript and inscription of any kind, (no difference whether genuine, or manufactured by crafty monks and designing villains); especially as there remains so much to be done after the assiduous industry and unremitting research of Adams Potter and others. No doubt they feel much afflicted that the light of modern science has dwindled away to a flickering blaze, and they are disposed in their benevolence to let in upon us a full flood of heavenly radiance from the luminaries of old.

That much benefit has accrued to the literary world from the researches of men qualified by their circumstances and their learning to make their labors satisfactory, or at least as much so as is ever to be hoped, is a fact gratefully acknowledged by every friend of science. But that so many men, neither able by their talents nor opportunities to make any efficient exertions to add any thing new to the stock of knowledge already acquired, should be so engrossed with the gleanings of a theme already exhausted, is a thing in itself absurd, and in the end amounts to no more than learned trifling. Is it for pleasure as well as improvement that they are thus engaged in this pursuit? Is it possible that examining rusty medals and endeavoring to restore the characters on the cinders of what once may possibly have been a valuable manuscript, can yield such solid pleasure that men will spend whole years in the pursuit? If so, why is it not more agreeable as well as more instructive to examine the various productions of modern art, that remain unimpaired and peruse the fair and unblotted sheets that daily issue from the press, that powerful engine for the conveyance of knowledge? Is it pleasant and beneficial to investigate imperfect remains of architecture? Or should we thus puzzle our brains to read, or waste our time in taking a *fac simile* of an unintelligible inscription on the buried pedestal of some statue, or the base of some fallen obelisk? If so, why is it not far more so to visit the magnificent structures of living men, and study life and manners after existing models? Is it not enough that men should live for their own age? Or if they can extend their influence farther, it is far more reasonable to bestow it on posterity than to vainly strive to retrace and live over the days that have long since passed. True, the history of the past is the proper criterion by

which to judge of the future: but it would appear more rational to study that which we have entire, and on which there is no doubt, than to pay our attention so exclusively to that which is covered in obscurity and wrapped in fable. Or, perhaps it is pure commiseration for the lot of those great men who have perished in the overthrow of an empire, such as we feel for one who was buried in an ocean of lava, during an eruption of Vesuvius, that actuates their breasts. Or their hearts are overflowing with pity that so many millions of men should have perished from the earth and all their institutions with all their improvements should be lost to the world. Yes, this is it: and they are anxious to bestow their mite to procure them the condolence of all future generations as some restoration for the evils they have experienced from fortune. In short they are in love with antiquity, and are entirely engaged in the study of things that are obsolete, generally to the neglect of those which more immediately concern them. They spend their whole life in a kind of dotage, brooding over the recollection of things passed away, or feeding their fancy with imaginary events that never transpired. But if these remarks are true with respect to the antiquities of nations who possessed the learning of the ancients, they are of double force with regard to those nations who were confessedly barbarous and ignorant. The remains to be found of these people, can only be regarded as objects of curiosity devoid of all real intrinsic value. And those who spend so much time in collecting these relics, appear to me more curious than wise: and all their researches manifest a lurking desire to be thought learned and scientific men. And sure all the wisdom is not enviable that is to be derived from an Indian grave or an ancient tumulus.

JUNIUS.

[FOR THE FOCUS.]

**A DISCOVERY.**

I am no moping antiquary, who finds pleasure only in ransacking among the rubbish of departed ages, but yet I love to ponder on the past; and a circumstance which very lately occurred, has had a great tendency to increase this propensity.

Rambling alone one evening along the bank of the little creek which skirts this village, I found myself suddenly amongst some of those rude piles of earth, which afford such abundant food for the speculation of the curious and the inquisitive, and are at the same time monumental proofs that this land was at some early period covered with a dense and industrious population. A low but continuous embankment stretched for some distance along the margin of the stream; and at each end of this stood a small mound of greater height. Others of these small mounds or tumuli, were scattered without any appearance of regularity or design over a considerable space of the level ground. About the centre of the plain, and at no great distance from the long elevation, was a circular enclosure, within which was situated a loose square heap of rough and unhewn stones.

Upon these stones I seated myself and began to muse upon the objects which surrounded me. Here thought I, has been the hand of man:—what various scenes and actions may not this little spot have been witness to. Here has been the stately step of the proud warrior; here has stood the wily politician; here has been the lightly tripping step of smiling beauty. Revenge, ambition, friendship, love—every thing that characterizes human nature has been here. But they are gone! and these few mournful vestiges scattered through the land, are all that remains of what was perhaps once a great and mighty people. And even these interesting relics will soon be lost, unless some more efficient means are taken to perpetuate their remembrance.

The American Antiquarian Society now occupied my thoughts for some time; and from this was an easy transition to the present race of Indians. The violation of treaties—wars—massacres—Governor Troup—plans of civilization—intermarriage—Crawford—Presidential question—and a thousand other images, with as little apparent

connection, were, by the singular association of ideas, successively suggested to my mind. But an interruption in the series, brought me back again to the commencement of my reverie.

"And here" said I "has been RELIGION too; and I am perhaps seated upon an altar, from whose base has went up the fervent aspirations of many a grateful spirit, to the God of their blind adoration." As I spoke this aloud, I fixed my eyes intently upon a mutilated fragment of flag-stone, which had fallen from the top of the pile and now lay at my feet: and what was my astonishment, when I was convinced that I saw upon its moss-covered surface the appearance of a partially obliterated inscription! Could it be then, that these people were so highly civilized as to possess the arts of calligraphy and engraving? What a discovery! But then may this not be the work of later ages? This was indeed a question which checked the first ardor of my transport; but I quickly spurned the idea: the situation, the place, every thing conspired to establish the correctness of my first opinion. And with all the rapture of one who has hit upon an old manuscript of Hericlaneum which has been embedded for ages in masses of impenetrable lava, I set about decyphering this strange inscription.

The characters were very similar to ours, but here all resemblance ceased. The language was to me incomprehensible, and to the Latin, the Greek and the Hebrew, have I successively resorted to throw some light on the subject, but in vain; not a trait of similarity can I discover. But in the hope that some more skilful antiquary may be successful in the investigation, I give it with as much precision and as entire as the case will admit of. It appears to be in the form of poetry, and is as follows:

HAYLERMAYLERTRIPTETIK  
TEELERTALLAHDOMINIK  
UNKELPROCHERDOMINOCHER  
HYPONTUS \* \* \* \* \*  
SAKYMAKYUNKAKE  
\* \* \* BOOH \* \* \* \* \*

**PHILANTIQUE**

NOTE—It will be useless for any of my fellow students to attempt finding the spot of which I have spoken: it is in a secluded and unfrequented place, and none but the original discoverer need hope to meet with farther success in his researches.

## THE LITERARY FOCUS.

OXFORD, 8. FEBRUARY, 1828.

☞ We dislike apologies, but must request our subscribers to be assured that the delay of this number was UNAVOIDABLE.

Our readers will find in this number, an essay of some length, touching upon the "Tariff question." We think it necessary to say that we make no avowal of our sentiment on this subject; but will be glad to receive sensible and ably written communications, supporting either side of the points in dispute. While we avoid the virulence and illiberality of local and party politics, our pages shall be at all times free for the calm discussion of questions of general expediency.

## CLOSE OF THE SESSION.

On Wednesday, the 26th. of March, the winter session of the Miami University terminates. There will be an exhibition of the Junior Class on that day; and on the evenings of the preceding Monday and Tuesday, the Literary Societies of the Institution, will exert themselves to entertain those who may be disposed to turn aside for a brief space, from the noise and abuse and rancor of party politics, for the purpose of enjoying the quiet and peaceful amusements of Literature, embittered by no unkindly feeling when present, and of which the remembrance is unaccompanied by a pang.

We would take occasion in connexion with the present subject, to call the attention of the public to the importance of these celebrations. We certainly do not mean to say that they do not offer in themselves sufficient gratification to recompense, for the slight inconveniences which may be encountered in their acquisition, all who relish such entertainments: for although great learning and eloquence cannot reasonably be expected from young men, who have not yet completed their preparatory course in letters, we think it no presumption to assert, in a country where the most miserable declaimers and ranters collect thousands at our Theatres to witness the barbarous treatment of good English, and of good sentiments, should any such accidentally fall into the hands of the performers, that the orations of

the Students of the University will deserve to be graced by the presence of those who are willing to spend their leisure in this manner. However this may be, we hold it to be the duty of our citizens to manifest their interest, in whatever concerns the welfare of our country, so nearly as education, by their attendance on its festivals, of which the design and operation are extremely beneficial. Those are periods of gaiety and gladness, with the student, who has devoted the hours of several months to the narrow and in some measure monotonous circle of Collegial occupations, when he is about to burst from all restraint, and rush, with wild excess of joyfulness, to those bosoms, of which the memory had been a source of pleasure in the darkest moments, and a spur to exertion: and whose absence is then more keenly felt, because so soon to end. The sun shines with peculiar brightness on a Commencement morning; and the recluse of College diffuses the exhilaration of his own feelings, on all around him; and laughter and cheerfulness shine on every countenance as they are felt at every heart. Will any envy the zest which long abstinence imparts to the youthful breast, buoyant with hope and careless and fearless of the future? And will not many be desirous of increasing and participating in the innocent mirth of those, who, that they may be qualified for the promotion of the honor and advantage of the community, but taste the joyous cup at intervals?

It is of the utmost moment that the influence of honorable motives on the ingenious mind should be aided by every means in our power: and the position will not be questioned, that if the desire of the approbation of parents and relatives, and indeed of the discriminating in general, should cease to be operative, the progress of youth in the attainment of knowledge would be very trifling: since in most cases the consideration of their own interests would not have sufficient strength to resist the impulse of present delights. In few young persons are habits of reflection so developed, as to turn them from the allurements which immediately strike the senses, to the future and more permanent advantages to be derived from avoiding the seductions of toys, that only glitter, it is true, yet to the youthful imagination they glitter very brightly. When then the student perceives that his

toils and self denial do not pass without notice and regard: and when he sees the respectable and influential members of society, even from a considerable distance, collect together to examine for themselves his advances in science, his emulation is roused; and when he knows that he is cared for, he will endeavor to make himself worthy of this care. At such times the laborious student has his triumph over his idle companion whose carelessness and mirth may have before moved his envy, when contrasted with his anxiety and exertion.

We designed to have made an appeal to the Ladies in particular: but have only room to express our conviction that a Congress of all the Literati of the East and West would not have half the influence in exciting the young men to exertion, which will be exercised by the bright eyes and laughter loving countenances of the other sex. If the Ladies honor literature, the men will be learned.

The Senate of our State, it appears from the public journals, have determined to divert the proceeds of the Salt lands from the object to which they were appropriated by Congress in the provisions of the grant—the support of the higher Literary Institutions. We may be excused if we exhibit some feeling in relation to this procedure, which adds to the revenue of each school district, some forty-five or fifty cents annually: and deprives our colleges of the funds so necessary in the early stage of their existence, for enabling them to afford those facilities in the acquisition of knowledge, which are now sought by the youth of the wealthier families in the more favored seminaries of the Eastern states. This decision of the Senate is in truth an exertion of their power, so far as it extends, to prevent our less wealthy citizens from obtaining for their children such an education as would qualify them for the highest offices under our Government;—and will naturally tend to the establishment of privileged orders: since their very moderate fortunes will render it impossible for most of our citizens to give their children the best means of gaining information; and thus those who possess this power may confer upon their posterity, the stores of wisdom, which ages have been accumulating, and which can be at-

tained only at considerable expense: and superior knowledge will COMMAND the more extensive influence. As to the interpretation by the Senate, of the phrase "Literary purposes," which occurs in the act of Congress, a very pertinent remark, which we have seen, is "that it will hereafter be proper to call every one, who can say his A, B, C, a LITERARY man, and in speaking of the Primer, to term it a LITERARY work: for so have decided the Senate of Ohio." Though we cannot in strict consistency with truth, profess ourselves admirers of their judgment, we are constrained to yield due commendation to the prudence and regard for their personal consideration, displayed by the majority of the Senate in this business: since unquestionably there is no other meaning of the word "literary" than what they have divined, which would embrace all the members of that very honorable and learned body.

#### CLASSICAL LEARNING.

*Extract from Judge Story's Discourse before the Harvard Society of Phi Beta Kappa.*

There is a growing propensity to disparage the importance of classical learning. Many causes both in England and America have conduced to this result. The signal success which has followed the enterprises in physical science, in mechanics, in chemistry, in civil engineering, and the ample rewards both of fortune and fame attendant upon that success, have had a very powerful influence upon the best talents of both countries. There is too, in the public mind, a strong disposition to turn every thing to practical account, to deal less with learning and more with experiment; to seek the solid comforts of opulence, rather than the indulgence of mere intellectual luxury. On the other hand, from the increase of materials as well as of critical skill, high scholarship is a prize of no easy attainment; and when attained it slowly receives public favor, and still more slowly reaches the certainty of wealth. Indeed it is often combined with a con-

templative shyness, and sense of personal independence, which yield little to policy, and with difficulty brook opposition. The honors of the world rarely cluster round it, and it cherishes with most enthusiasm those feelings which the active pursuits of life necessarily impair, if they do not wholly extinguish. The devotion to it, therefore, where it exists, often becomes our exclusive passion; and the gratification of it becomes the end, instead of the means of life. Instances of extraordinary success by mere scholarship, are more rare than in other professions. It is not then to be wondered at, that the prudence of some minds, and the ambition of others, should shrink from labors which demand days and nights of study, and hold out rewards which are distant, or pleasures which are for the most part purely intellectual.

Causes like these, in an age which scrutinizes and questions the pretensions of every department of literature, have contributed to bring into discussion the use and value of classical learning. I do not stand up on this occasion to vindicate its claims, or extol its merits. That would be fit theme for one of our most distinguished scholars in a large discourse. But I may not withhold my willing testimony to its excellence, nor forget the fond regret with which I left its enticing studies for the discipline of more severe instructors.

The importance of classical learning to professional education is so obvious, that the surprise is that it could ever have become matter of disputation. I speak not of its power in refining the taste, in disciplining the judgment, in invigorating the understanding, or in warming the heart with elevated sentiment; but of its power of direct, positive, necessary instruction. Until the eighteenth century, the mass of science in its principal branches was deposited in the dead languages,

and much of it still reposes there. To be ignorant of these languages is to shut out the lights of former times, or to examine them only through the glimmerings of inadequate translations. What should we say of the jurist, who never aspired to learn the maxims of law and equity which adorn the Roman codes? What of the physician, who could deliberately surrender all the knowledge heaped up for so many centuries in the latinity of Europe? What of the minister of religion, who should choose not to study the scriptures in the original tongue, and should be content to trust his faith and his hopes, for time and for eternity, to the dimness of translations, which may reflect the literal import, but rarely can reflect with unbroken force the beautiful spirit of the text? Shall he, whose vocation it is "to allure to brighter worlds and lead the way," be himself the blind leader of the blind? Shall he follow the commentaries of fallible man, instead of gathering the true sense from the Gospels themselves? Shall he venture upon the exposition of divine truths, whose studies have never aimed at the first principles of interpretation? Shall he proclaim the doctrines of salvation who knows not, and cares not whether he preaches an idle gloss or the genuine text of salvation? If a theologian may not pass his life in collating the various readings, he may, and ought to aspire to that criticism which illustrates religion by all the resources of human learning; which studies the manners and institutions of the age and country in which Christianity was first promulgated; which kindles an enthusiasm for its precepts by familiarity with the persuasive language of Him who poured out his blessings on the mount, and of him at whose impressive appeal Felix trembled.

I pass over all consideration of the written treasures of antiquity, which

have survived the wreck of empires and dynasties, of monumental trophies and triumphal arches, of palaces, of princes, and temples of the Gods. I pass over all consideration of those admired compositions in which wisdom speaks as with a voice from Heaven; of those sublime efforts of poetical genius which still freshen as they pass from age to age in undying vigor; of those finished histories which enlighten and instruct governments in their duty and their destiny; of those matchless orations which roused nations to arms, and chained senates to the chariot wheels of all-conquering eloquence. These all may now be read in our vernacular tongue. Ay, as one remembers a dead friend by gathering up the broken fragments of his image—as one listens to the tale of a dream twice told—as one catches the roar of the ocean in the ripple of a rivulet—as one sees the blaze of noon in the first glimmer of twilight.

There is one objection however, on which I would for a moment dwell, because it has a commanding influence over many minds, and is clothed with specious importance. It is often said that there have been eminent men and eminent writers, to whom the ancient languages were unknown; men who have risen by the force of their talents, and writers who have written with a purity and ease which hold them up as models for imitation. On the other hand, it is often said that scholars do not always compose either with elegance or chasteness; that their diction is sometimes loose and harsh, and sometimes ponderous and affected. Be it so.—I am not disposed to call in question the accuracy of either statement. But I would nevertheless say that the presence of classical learning was not the cause of the faults in the one class, nor the absence of it the cause of the excellence of the other.—And I would put this fact as an answer to all

such reasonings, that there is not a single language of modern Europe, in which literature has made any considerable advances, which is not directly of Roman origin, or has not incorporated into its very structure, many, very many of the idioms and peculiarities of the ancient tongues. The English language affords a strong illustration of the truth of this remark. It abounds with words and meanings drawn from classical sources. Innumerable phrases retain the symmetry of their ancient dress. Innumerable expressions have retained their vivid tints from the beautiful dyes of Roman and Grecian roots. If scholars therefore do not write our language with ease, or purity, or elegance, the cause must lie somewhat deeper than a conjectural ignorance of its true diction.

But I am prepared to yield still more to the force of the objection. I do not deny that a language may be built up without the aid of any foreign materials, and be at once flexible for speech and graceful for composition. That the literature of a nation may be splendid and instructive, full of interest and beauty in thought and in diction, which has no kindred with classical learning; that in the vast stream of time it may run its own current unstained by the admixture of surrounding languages; that it may realize the ancient fable, "*Doris amara suam non intermisceat undam;*" That it may retain its own flavor, and its own bitter saltiness too. But I do deny that such a national literature does in fact exist in modern Europe, in that community of nations, of which we form a part, and to whose fortunes and pursuits in literature and arts we are bound by all our habits, and feelings, and interests.

There is not a single nation from the North to the South of Europe, from the bleak shores of the Baltic to the bright plains of immortal Italy, whose literature is not embedded

in the very elements of classical learning. The literature of England is, in an emphatic sense, the production of her scholars; of men who have cultivated letters in her universities, and colleges, and grammar schools; of men who thought any life too short, chiefly because it left some relic of antiquity unmastered, and any other fame humble, because it faded in the presence of Roman and Grecian genius. He who studies English literature without the lights of classical learning loses half the charms of its sentiments and style, of its force and feelings, of its delicate touches, of its delightful allusions, of its illustrative associations. Who that reads the poetry of Gray does not feel that it is the refinement of classical taste which gives such inexpressible vividness and transparency to his diction? Who that reads the concentrated sense and melodious versification of Dryden and Pope, does not perceive in them the disciples of the old school, whose genius was inflamed by the heroic verse, the terse satire, and the playful wit of antiquity? Who that meditates over the strains of Milton, does not feel that he drank deep

—At "Siloa's brook that flowed  
Fast by the oracle of God"—

that the fires of his magnificent mind were lighted by coals from ancient altars?

It is no exaggeration to declare, that he who proposes to abolish classical studies, proposes to render in a great measure inert and unedifying the mass of English literature for three centuries: to rob us of much of the glory of the past, and much of the instruction of future ages: to blind us to excellencies which few may hope to equal, and none to surpass; to annihilate associations which are interwoven with our best sentiments, and give to distant times and countries a presence and reality as if they were in fact our own.

#### DUELLING.

[A few pointed sarcasms, like this of Dean Swift, levelled at the shameful practice of duelling, we think would soon bring it into disrepute. Place the duellist in his proper light, and paint his HONORABLE profession in its true colors, and the voice of society will soon effect the rest.]

"I should be exceeding sorry to find the legislature making any new laws against the practice of duelling, because the methods are ready and many for a wise man to avoid a quarrel with honor, or engage in it with innocence. And I can discover no political evil in suffering bullies, sharpers, and rakes, to rid the world of each other by a method of their own, when the law hath not been able to find an expedient."

The ensuing remarks, extracted from Dr. Brown's 'Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind,' although perhaps obvious, have not been so often repeated as to become superfluous. It is a point on which the wise do not always preserve their wisdom, and on which even the good sometimes forget their humanity.

#### MONTHLY REVIEW.

"There is a power in every individual, over the tranquility of almost every individual. There are emotions, latent in the minds of those whom we meet, which a few words of ours may at any time call forth; and the moral influence which keeps this power over the uneasy feelings of others, under due restraint, is not the least important of the moral influences, in its relation to general happiness.

"There are minds which can delight in exercising this cruel sway,—which rejoice in suggesting thoughts that may poison the confidence of friends, and render the virtues that were loved, objects of suspicion to him who loved them. In the daily and hourly intercourse of human life, there are human beings, who exert their malicious skill in devising what subjects may be most likely to bring into the mind of him with whom they converse, the most mor-

tifying remembrances;—who pay visits of condolence, that they may be sure of making grief a little more severely felt;—who are faithful in conveying to every one the whispers of unmerited scandal, of which, otherwise, he never would have heard, as he never could have suspected them,—though, in exercising this friendly office, they are careful to express sufficient indignation against the slanderer, and to bring forward as many grounds of suspicion against different individuals, as their fancy can call up;—who talk to some disappointed beauty, of all the splendid preparations for the marriage of her rival,—to the unfortunate dramatic poet, of the success of the last night's piece, and of the great improvement which has taken place in modern taste;—and who, if they could have the peculiar good fortune of meeting with any one, whose father was hanged, would probably find no subject so attractive to their eloquence, as the number of executions that were speedily to take place.

“Such power *man* may exercise over the feelings of *man*; and as it is impossible to frame laws which can comprehend injuries of this sort, such power *man* may exercise over *man* with legal impunity. but it is a power, of which the *virtuous* man will as little think of availing himself, for purposes of cruelty, as if a thousand laws had made it as criminal as it is immoral;—a power which he will as little think of exercising, because it would require only the utterance of a few easy words, as of inflicting a mortal blow, because it would require only a single motion of his hand.”—(Lect. lxxxv.

FEMALE AUTHORS.—In the notes of Blackwood's Magazine, the Ettrick Shepherd pronounces the following beautiful eulogium upon female authors.—“Oh sirs! what a glorious galaxy of female genius and vir-

tue have we to gaze on with admiration, pure and unimproved in our native hemisphere. There—that star is the large and lustrous star of Joanna Bailie; and there the star of Hamilton—and Edgeworth—and Grant—and Austen—and Tighe—and Mitford—and Hemans! beautiful and beloved in all the relations of Christian life, these are the women, Mr. North, maids, wives or widows, whom the religious spirit of the protestant land will venerate as long as the pure fires of a holy faith burn upon their altars. These are the ladies, Mr. Tickler, and thank God we have many like them, although less conspicuous, who, to guard from insult of look, or whisper, or touch, what man, English, Scotch or Irish, but would meet his death? And why? because the union of genius and virtue, religion and morality, and gentleness and purity, is a soul uplifting sight, and ratifies the great bond of nature, by which we are made heirs of the immortal sky.”

SCHOLAR.—The life that is devoted to knowledge passes silently away, and is very little diversified by events. To talk in public, to think in solitude, to read and to hear, to inquire and answer inquiries, is the business of a scholar. He wanders about the world without pomp or terror, and is neither known nor valued but by men like himself.

Rasselas.

#### RESPONSE DURING A STORM.

O! when the growling winds contend, and all  
The sounding forest fluctuates in the storm;  
To sink in warm repose, and hear the din  
Howl o'er the steady battlements, delights  
Above the luxury of common sleep.

#### MATHEMATICAL PROBLEM.

[That the young mathematicians who wish for something to exercise their ingenuity, may not be disappointed, we have selected the following question:]

Given the altitude, the sum of the sides, and the angle at the vertex, to construct the triangle.

## POETIC DEPARTMENT.



[FOR THE FOCUS.]

## CURE FOR 'THE HORRORS'.

Thoughts of anguish fire my breast,  
A dark'ning gloom hangs o'er my soul,  
With pain and agony oppress'd,  
My grief admits of no control.

Affection's soft and winning smile  
Oft has it been my lot to share;  
And Friendship too has help'd beguile  
My life of each corroding care.

I have no REAL cause of sorrow  
To dim the sunshine of my breast,  
But from Imagination borrow  
The pangs that rob my mind of rest.

Fancy, who lends her kindly aid  
To give to life a brighter ray,  
Can also throw a murky shade  
Over the clearest, brightest day.

At Fancy's touch bright visions flee,  
And all my fairest prospects fade:  
The world appears a waste to me,  
And I for care and misery made.

These painful griefs will still—but stay  
I'll leave complaint to gloomy churls;  
I've still a plan to drive away  
Such thoughts: I'LL GO TO SEE THE GIRLS.

MERVYN.

## SOCIAL CONVERSE.

Hail social converse, source of present pleasure,  
Sweet and reviving as the rosy morning,  
When first the day-star gilds the face of nature

With his blest radiance.

Hail sacred Friendship, fraught with choicest blessings,  
When souls congenial taste thy sacred union  
Bound by the cement of refined affection,  
Founded on virtue.

Truth, heavenly goddess, baffles our researches,  
While painful languor springs from ceaseless study:  
Welcome sweet converse, kind refreshing cordial,  
Ever delightful.

Thy charming influence soothes the ruffled passion,  
When pale misfortune sinks the weary spirits;

So the clouds vanish when the radiant sunbeams

Shine in full splendor.

If thus exalted, thy enliv'ning pleasures  
In these dull regions, how sublimely glorious  
'Mid the mansions where immortal friendship

Blooms in perfection.

CORINA.

## DIRGE

OF A HIGHLAND CHIEF EXECUTED AFTER THE REBELLION.

Son of the mighty and the free!  
Lov'd leader of the faithful brave!  
Was it for high rank'd chief like thee,  
To fill a nameless grave?

Oh! hadst thou slumber'd with the slain,  
Had Glory's death-bed been thy lot,  
E'en though on red Culloden's plain,  
We then had mourn'd thee not.

But darkly closed thy morn of fame,  
That morn whose sunbeam rose so fair;  
Revenge alone may breathe thy name,  
The watch-word of despair!

Yet, Oh! if gallant spirit's power  
Has e'er ennobled death like thine,  
Then Glory mark'd thy parting hour,  
Last of a mighty line!

O'er thine own bowers the sunshine falls,  
But cannot cheer their lonely gloom;  
Those beams that gild thy native walls  
Are sleeping on thy tomb.

Spring, on thy mountains laughs the while;  
Thy green woods wave in vernal air;  
But the lov'd scenes may vainly smile,  
Not e'en thy dust is there!

On thy blue hills no bugle sound  
Is mingling with the torrent's roar;  
Unmark'd the red deer sport around,  
Thou lead'st the chase no more.

Thy gates are clos'd, thy halls are still,  
Those halls where swell'd the choral strain:  
They hear the whirlwind's murmur'ing shrill,  
And all is hush'd again.

Thy bard his pealing harp has broke,  
His fire, his joy of song is past;  
One lay to mourn thy fate he woke,  
His saddest, and his last!

No other theme to him was dear  
Than lofty deeds of thine;  
Hush'd be the strain thou canst not hear,  
Last of a mighty line!

FROM THE MUSEUM.

## DREAMS.

Oh! there is a dream of early youth,  
And it never comes again;

'Tis a vision of light, of life, and truth,  
That flits across the brain:  
And love is the theme of that early dream,  
So wild, so warm, so new,  
That in all our after years I deem,  
That early dream we rue.

Oh! there is a dream of maturer years,  
More turbulent by far;  
'Tis a vision of blood, and of woman's tears,  
For the theme of that dream is war:  
And we toil in the field of danger and death,  
And shout in the battle array,  
Till we find that fame is a bodiless breath,  
That vanisheth away.

Oh! there is a dream of hoary age,  
'Tis a vision of gold in store—  
Of sums noted down on the figured page,  
To be counted o'er and o'er;  
And we fondly trust in our glittering dust,  
As a refuge from grief and pain,  
Till our limbs are laid on that last dark bed,  
Where the wealth of the world is vain.

And is it thus, from man's birth to his grave—  
In the path which all are treading?  
Is there nought in that long career to save  
From remorse and self-upbraiding?  
O yes, there's a dream so pure, so bright,  
That the being to whom it is given,  
Hath bathed in a sea of living light,  
And the theme of that dream is Heaven.

[BLACKWOOD'S MAG.]

From the Forget me Not.

### THE ISLAND OF ATLANTIS.

Oh thou Atlantic dark and deep,  
Thou wilderness of waves,  
Where all the tribes of earth may sleep  
In their uncrowded graves!

The sunbeams on thy bosom wake,  
Yet never light thy gloom;  
The tempests burst, yet never shake  
Thy depths, thou mighty tomb!

Thou thing of mystery, stern and drear,  
Thy secrets who hath told?—  
The warrior and his sword are there,  
The merchant and his gold.

There lie their myriads in thy pall,  
Secure from steel and storm;  
And he, the feaster on them all,  
The canker worm.

Yet on this wave the mountain's brow  
Once glowed in morning beam;  
And, like an arrow from the bow,  
Out sprang the stream:

And on its bank the olive grove,  
And the peach's luxury,  
And the damask rose—the nightbird's love—  
Perfumed the sky.

Where art thou, proud ATLANTIS, now?  
Where are thy bright and brave?

Priest, people, warriors' living flow?  
Look on that wave!

Crime deepen'd on the recreant land,  
Long guilty, long forgiven;  
There power uprear'd the bloody hand,  
There scoff'd at Heaven.

The word went forth—the word of wo—  
The judgment thunders pealed;  
The fiery earthquake blaz'd below;  
Its doom was seal'd.

Now on its halls of ivory  
Lie giant weed and ocean slime,  
Burying from man's and angel's eye  
The land of crime.

### FEMALE BEAUTY.

What's female beauty, but an air divine,  
Thro' which the mind's all gentle graces shine  
They, like the sun, irradiate all between;  
The body charms because the soul is seen.  
Hence men are often captives of a face,  
They know not why, of no peculiar grace;  
Some forms though bright, no mortal man  
can bear;  
Some none resist, though not exceeding fair.

[Scene, a country school house.]

BOY—G-l-a-s-s.

TEACHER—Well! what does that spell?

BOY—Don't know.

TEACHER—What's in the window at home?

BOY—Why, Dad's old breeches.

### AGENTS

FOR THE LITERARY FOCUS.

*Cincinnati*, O.—A. N. Riddle, Esqr.  
*Franklin*, O.—Col. M. W. Earheart.  
*Hamilton*, O.—J. B. Camron.  
*Hillsboro*, O.—Robert Way.  
*Lebanon*, O.—Mathias I. Miller.  
*Xenia*, O.—Maj. James Galloway.  
*Danville*, Ky.—John N. Allen.  
*Harrodsburgh*, Ky.—Addison F. Mays.  
*Newport*, Ky.—Ira Root.  
*Paris*, Ky.—Joel R. Lyle.  
*Houston's P. O.* (N. C.)—A. K. Barr.

### THE LITERARY FOCUS.

Is published monthly, each number containing 24 pages, at \$1 in advance—\$1.25 in six months—\$1.50 if not paid until the expiration of the year.

All letters and communications addressed to the Editors, must be POST-PAID.

PUBLISHED FROM THE SOCIETIES' PRESS.

J. D. SMITH, PR.